



## APPLETON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT Official Rules for Youth Soccer 2024

The following rules and regulations have been established to allow participants to compete in a safe and fair environment. Participants and coaches are to be familiar with these directives. These rules may be subject to change if during the season a team gains an unfair advantage over other teams due to a given rule in the league. All coaches and players will be notified of any rule changes made during the season.

### A. Players, Field, and Equipment

1. It is suggested that all participants play at their current grade level. APRD policies allow a player to play up a maximum of one grade level. Any player who intentionally violates this rule by misrepresenting age or grade, will be disqualified and will not be allowed to play for the remainder of the season. Any team who knowingly allows an illegal player to play will forfeit the game(s) in question.
2. Weather related updates can be found using the APRD weather information line at 832-3900, select Option 1.
3. All Players are HIGHLY encouraged to wear shin guards. Socks must be worn over the shin guards. Tennis shoes or soccer shoes are allowed. ***Shoes with a front cleat, such as rubber Baseball cleats and shoes that contain metal or metal-tipped cleats, are prohibited.***
4. **All players on teams must wear the APRD t-shirts.** The t-shirts are not allowed to be modified in any way.
  - For 1<sup>st</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade leagues, goalies must wear a shirt of different color than his or her team, or the other team.  
**NOTE :** When changing the goalie, the coach **MUST** report the change to the referee.
5. All jewelry, *including regular and starter earrings*, must be removed prior to the start of play. The ONLY exceptions are religious or medical medals, which shall be taped inside the uniform if worn. This includes team practices as well.
6. For safety of the individual and other players, individuals are not permitted to play if they are wearing a hard cast.
7. For all games for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and up, the minimum number of players to start a game is 7. Teams with fewer than seven players will still have an opportunity to play their game, but the result will be recorded as a forfeit. Kindergarten and 1st grade should play with the correct number of players, as described in the 2018 Quick Rules. Teams may play with fewer players, if agreed upon by both coaches.
8. All players and coaches should become acquainted with the sections of the field and the markings:

<i>Goal Areas</i>	<i>Center Circle</i>
<i>Penalty Areas</i>	<i>Corner Arcs</i>
<i>Center Line</i>	<i>Penalty Marks</i>

### B. Definitions

1. **TEAM SIDELINE**  
Both teams will be on one side of the field with ALL spectators on the opposite side. Spectator lines will be enforced, and all spectators must be away from touchline.
2. **KICK-OFF**  
The home team starts with the 1<sup>st</sup> half kick-off, the away team will choose the side of the field. The away team will start with the second half kickoff. In K-1<sup>st</sup> Grade, teams will alternate to begin the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters with a kickoff.  
**Note: Per US Youth Soccer rules change in 2016, a Kick-Off may now be played in any direction.**

### 3. SUBSTITUTIONS

In all grade levels, both teams may make substitutions between periods or at the half, at any throw in, after a goal has been scored, or on a goal kick. If the play is stopped for an injured player, he/she must be substituted. The injured person may re-enter at the next substitution opportunity.

For all grades: No substitutions allowed on corner kicks.

### 4. OUT OF PLAY The entire ball must be completely over the sideline or goal line, to be out of play. If any part of the ball is touching the line, it is still in play. When the ball is kicked over the sideline, it is awarded to the team which did not cause it to go out of bounds by a “throw-in”.

### 5. THROW-INS

A Throw-In will occur on a ball out of bounds for grades 2 through 8. Grades K and 1 will NOT utilize a throw in to put a ball back in play, but rather will set the ball on the sideline and kick / pass the ball back in. On a “throw in”, part of both feet must be touching the ground, and the ball must be thrown in with both hands over the head, bringing the ball behind the head and then forward. The player must face the field of play in the direction the ball is thrown, and their feet must be behind the touchline. **NEW-2021 Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade will choose to play “no thrown ins” at the beginning of the year and coaches and referees will carry a ball and throw it to an open spot no closer to the goal to continue play.**

### 6. GOAL KICKS

A “goal kick” will be awarded when the offensive team kicks the ball over the goal line, outside or over the goal posts. The ball will be placed on the line in front of the goal area and may be kicked by the goalkeeper or another defensive player; the ball must clear the penalty area in order to be considered a legal kick and not be played before it clears this area. ***If after two unsuccessful tries of a goal kick, the referee has the option of moving the goal kick spot up. A GOAL MAY BE SCORED DIRECTLY FROM A GOAL KICK.*** ***Started 2022-A goal kick line will be established by the referee on goal kicks in which the non-kicking team will have to stay behind until the ball is put in play. This line is to help the goalie or the team with the ball to move the ball further away from their goal before the other team is allowed to play the ball.***

### 7. CORNER KICKS

A “corner kick” will be awarded when the defensive team kicks the ball over its own goal line, outside the goal area. The ball will be placed inside the small arc at the corner of the field, nearest where the ball went out of bounds, by a member of the opposing team. **A GOAL MAY BE SCORED DIRECTLY FROM A CORNER KICK.**

### 8. DROP BALL

A “drop ball” is used to put the ball back in play when it was kicked out of play at the same time by two opposing players, or when play was stopped because of injury, etc. and neither team had possession of the ball at the time play was stopped. No drop ball in penalty area. Drop must be outside of penalty area.

### 9. PLAYING THE BALL WHILE LAYING ON THE FIELD

At all times, players may not kick/play the ball while lying on field, except for the goalie.  
*Penalty: Indirect free kick*

### 10. HEADERS

In adhering to US Youth Soccer guidelines for grades K-8, headers may not be used as a passing or scoring technique, and therefore should not be encouraged or practiced at this level. Use of the head WILL be allowed for the purpose of controlling the ball only. Teams will not be penalized for the use of the head to control a ball, however a header used as a scoring or passing technique will be ruled a dead ball, with possession of the ball being awarded to the opposing team, with an indirect free kick.

### 11. SLIDE TACKLING

For the safety of the participants, slide tackling will not be allowed for any age group in the Appleton Parks and Recreation Department Youth Soccer Program. An infraction will result in a foul and may result in further disciplinary action at the discretion of the official (yellow or red card).

### 12. PENALTY KICKS FOR 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE & ABOVE ONLY

A penalty kick is awarded against a team that commits one of the ten offenses for which a direct free kick is awarded, inside its own penalty area and while the ball is in play. Additional time is allowed for a penalty kick to be taken at the end of each half.

NOTE: The goalkeeper *is allowed to move his/her feet on the goal line before/during kick* and must stand between the goal posts on the goal line until the ball is kicked. The ball must be kicked forward and may not be kicked again by the same

kicker until touched by another player. All players except the kicker and the goalkeeper must be outside the penalty area, until the ball has traveled its circumference after being kicked.

### 13. INDIRECT FREE KICKS

An "indirect free kick" will be awarded when:

- The goalie delays the game by stalling in getting rid of the ball. *(The keeper must release the ball within 5 seconds of picking the ball up with their hands.)*
- A player interferes with the goalie.
- A player is "offside".
- An illegal person is on the field: coach, players, or spectators.
- A team substitutes at the wrong time.
- Any player or coach displays unsportsmanlike conduct.
- A goalie handles the ball, and the goalie did not report to referee when he entered the game.
- A goalie handles the ball directly from a throw-in.
- The ball is kicked a second time by the kicker on a free kick, a goal kick, a kickoff, or when thrown in or rebounding from the posts or crossbar.
- A player obstructs an opponent by using his body to block a player in control of the ball, while not intending to play it himself/herself.
- A player falls on the ball in order to trap it, or to give his/her team an advantage.

**All fouls for first through third grade are indirect kicks.**

***NOTE: On an indirect free kick, a goal can is not scored unless it touches another player before it enters the goal.***

### 14. DIRECT FREE KICKS

#### **4<sup>TH</sup> Grade thru 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Leagues only**

For direct free kicks, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken, and the kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player. *If a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal is awarded.*

A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team when an opponent:

- kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- jumps at an opponent
- charges an opponent
- strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- pushes an opponent

A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following four offenses:

- tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball
- holds an opponent
- spits at an opponent
- handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area).

***A direct free kick is taken from where the offense occurred.***

***Note: A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offenses is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.***

### 15. OFFSIDE RULE

#### **FOR 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE THRU 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE LEAGUES ONLY**

**A player is in an offside position if he/she is nearer to his/her opponents' goal line than both the ball and the defending team's players, excluding the goalkeeper.**

A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball is touched or played by one of his/her team, the offside player is:

- interfering with play or
- interfering with an opponent or
- gaining an advantage by being in that position

A player is not in an offside position if:

- He/she is in his own half of the field of play.
- He/she is even with the deepest player on the opposing team, excluding the goal keeper

## 16. GOALKEEPER

### FOR 1st GRADE THROUGH 8th GRADE LEAGUES

After the goalie has the ball in the hands, they may run with it to the top of his/her penalty area (the biggest box). The goalie can then throw, kick, roll, or drop the ball in order to get rid of it. Please note the goalie has five seconds in order to release the ball.

## 17. CHARGING THE GOALKEEPER

A player may not charge the goalkeeper whether they have possession of the ball or not. This will be a judgment decision by the referee and his/her decision is final.

## 18. SPORTSMANSHIP - CONDUCT OF PLAYERS, PARENTS & COACHES

- The goal of the APRD youth soccer program is to introduce and help children develop the skills that will allow them to fully enjoy the game of soccer. We strive to create a safe a fun, inclusive, stress free atmosphere for children to learn, and sportsmanship and fair play is emphasized. Parents and spectators are EXPECTED to enthusiastically uphold and endorse our core beliefs of skill development, sportsmanship, and fun through both their words and behavior.
- Our coaches receive training that communicates the beliefs and goals of the Appleton Parks & Recreation department youth sports program, and are provided with tools, materials, and support to help them deliver quality soccer instruction to our young players. We expect our coaches to be shining examples of good sportsmanship and ethical behavior, as well as enthusiastic ambassadors of our program beliefs and goals. Coaches should openly discuss proper sportsmanship with their players and parents.
- The program coordinator and site supervisor will not tolerate abuse, foul language, and inappropriate behavior from coaches, players, parents, or fans, and for the good of the program, this behavior will be dealt with promptly and decisively.
- Appleton Parks and Recreation reserves the right to assign penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct upon review. Appleton Parks and Recreation also reserves the right to further the penalty upon assessment of the situation.
- **The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final. The decisions of the referee, and all other APRD officials, must always be respected.**
- **Players, coaches, and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in the spirit of the law as well as the letter of the law. A referee or APRD official can remove any coach or fan that is disturbing a match being played. If coaches or fans refuse to leave, the game may be forfeited. The APRD staff and referees reserve the right to substitute players out if they are making dangerous plays with the ability to allow them to reenter into the game. If at any time the APRD staff feels it is necessary to start issuing yellow and red cards to uphold safety and sportsmanship standards. It will do so while notifying coaches.**

## 19. STANDINGS / AWARDS

- Participant Ribbons will be awarded for all teams at the K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Level. Score will be kept, but standings will not be tracked in these age groups.
- Ribbons will be awarded to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishers in grades 3 through 6. Season standings will be tracked in these age groups.
- **Tiebreaker rule**  
*In the event of a tie within your division the following procedure will be used to determine the place of finish.*
  - A. Head-to-head competition
  - B. Goal differential of HTH matches
  - C. Goal Differential for entire season
  - D. All games have a +7-goal cap for season differential